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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. ELECTIONS/OBAMA PRESIDENCY,
PIRACY, GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, IRAQ, IRAN'S NUCLEAR
PROGRAM; NEW DELHI - NOVEMBER 22-24, 2008.

This cable reports on relevant media reaction from India's large non-English press. Embassy New Delhi reports on English-language media via email in the daily "Early Edition." USG customers please write to Geeta Krishali (KrishaliG@state.gov) to subscribe to the "Early Edition."

U.S. ELECTIONS/OBAMA PRESIDENCY

11. "HOW BENEFICIAL IS THE OBAMA WIN TO THE ISLAMIC WORLD?" editorial in the November 24, 2008, Mumbai edition of right-of-center Marathi daily SAAMNA. "The world knows that neither the U.S. Presidential elections nor the elections to the House of Representatives make any difference to the U.S. policies and programs. But the point is that the U.S. President does impact the rest of the world and he makes a difference to the Indian policymakers as well... In many of his presidential campaign speeches, Obama has shown the resolve to withdraw the U.S.-led occupation forces from Iraq. But that rhetoric can be made possible only when the U.S. is able to win over the Iraqi people. Also the U.S will need to initiate a peace process with Iran and that can be initiated only when the U.S. withdraws the allegations leveled against Iran. The situation is far too complex for the U.S. The economic meltdown has further worsened the situation and the U.S. cannot even threaten military action against these 'Islamic' forces, like it did in the

past... One does not foresee Obama departing from the past foreign policy as far as Islamic countries are concerned. How different does one expect him to be with regard to Pakistan or Afghanistan? The global war against Al Qaeda will gain firm focus even in the Obama presidency... On a lighter note, the Islamic world does not expect much radical policy from a man who has taken enough care to remove the 'Hussein' from his name..."

PIRACY

¶2. "NEED TO WIPE OUT SOMALI PIRATES" editorial in the the November 23, 2008 centrist Gujarati daily GUJARATMITRA. "At the time when the world has made such impressive progress and development, it is hard to believe that trade and commerce between nations through waterways is being held to ransom by the Somali pirates operating off the Gulf of Aden. Like all other African countries, even Somalia is afflicted by poverty and backwardness. Anarchy has reached such epidemic levels in this nation that it threatens cargo, and vessels carrying items for trade via sea routes opt for longer routes. This might prove to be a costly business.... The need of the hour for international sea faring nations is to come together and collectively put an end to this menace on the sea. India has shown how such rogue elements can be tackled."

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GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

¶3. "WATER TERRORISM," editorial in the November 24 independent Kolkata Bengali daily, ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA. "It is a matter of great concern that a link between piracy and Islamic terrorism is...growing stronger. This problem cannot become the headache of any particular country. This is a global problem. The way of tackling it may also become controversial at times. So, it is extremely important to evolve necessary international regulations. It will not be sufficient for India to merely advance towards resolving the problem but it will also have to put it in its proper perspective before the international arena as soon as possible."

IRAQ

¶4. "WILL BUSH BE EXONERATED?", editorial in the November 21 right-of-center Urdu daily "INQUILAB", Mumbai: "Most of the people at international level, now understand that war imposed on Iraq, was nothing but a naked aggression of George Bush and his administration, greed to capture Iraq's oil reservoirs and the most condemnable and gross violation of international rules and norms. But those who consider the Iraq war a defeat of America, why do they hesitate to declare him a culprit of massacre in Iraq (the Iraq war killed more than 6 lakhs of guileless citizens)? Why should such a person not be prosecuted under international laws? Will it not be a bad precedent that Bush-like fanatics are left free despite committing many heinous crimes? If the world community thinks that George W. Bush is responsible for the Iraq war, a violator of international laws and a culprit of civilized world, his prosecution is essential. All claims of championship of peace and justice shall be considered as hollow claims, if the flag-bearers of peace, justice and human rights, leave such a big criminal at large."

¶5. "IRAQ - U.S. AGREEMENT", editorial in the November 22 right-of-center Urdu bi-weekly "DAWAT", New Delhi:

"American military incursion on Iraq has been found baseless and unjustified. That is why its allies are hesitant to extend their cooperation any more. They also started demanding early withdrawal of America from Iraq. But America has refused to get out of Iraq. Now, since President Bush is departing from the White House and president-elect Barrack Obama is in favor of early and quick withdrawal of forces, the American administration has entered into a security agreement with the government of Iraq. However, by the dint of this agreement, American forces are now in a sound position to remain stationed in Iraq for another three years. American military leadership is not in favor of leaving Iraq. One can now assess the real motives of America in capturing Iraq."

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IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

16. "A POSTIVE REPORT ABOUT IRAN", editorial in the November 23 right-of-center Urdu daily "MUNSIF", Hyderabad: "Who gave America or the Western countries a right to impose sanctions on Iran? Why do they not demand a ban be imposed on Israel's nuclear program? Iran has repeatedly assured the international community that it will never use its nuclear program, and it's enriched Uranium for weapon-production. Now, El Baradai's report has vindicated Iran's stand. It is, now, the responsibility of the world community to pressure the Western countries, especially the U.S., to refrain from coercing Iran. Every country has a prerogative to continue its peaceful nuclear program. No country should criticize peaceful programs of other countries. India and other developing countries should support Iran's stand. America and the Western countries should demand instead the inspection of Israel's nuclear program by a competent international agency, so that the world may be informed of the horrendous intentions of the Jewish nation. Israel, in fact, is the most dreaded threat to world peace."
WHITE